

## **Hurricane Katrina and Rita Disaster Relief Efforts Summary of November 17, 2005 Meeting**

On November 17, 2005, Wisconsin Emergency Management staff convened local, state and federal agency representatives and volunteer organizations. See Attachment A for the meeting agenda and the list of attendees.

### **PURPOSE**

The primary purpose of the meeting was to provide an update for agencies and Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters on the status of interim housing initiatives and programs for Katrina evacuees around the State. At this forum, participants discussed issues, current and future resources available to address the needs of these evacuees.

### **SLIDE SHOW**

The Katrina Slide Show gave participants an overview of two major agency/volunteer organization initiatives in the state: the Milwaukee Disaster Relief efforts and the statewide program. Major funding for housing evacuees came from FEMA, through the Public Assistance (PA) program under Section 403, and the Individual and Household Program (IHP) program under Section 408. The U.S. Housing and Urban Development Program is providing funding for housing under the Katrina Disaster Housing Assistance Program (KDHP).

### **CHANGES IN PROGRAM GUIDANCE**

On November 14, 2005 FEMA issued a guidance memo that announced a major accelerated shift from FEMA'S PA housing under Section 403 to Section 408 IHP program.

**DISCUSSION:** Anna Pudlo, FEMA Region V Staff, emphasized four key points in the program changes. The accelerated time schedule requires: (1) All evacuees must be out of corporate lodging by December 1, 2005. (2) All leases under Section 403 (Public Assistance) must be signed by December 1, 2005. (3) These rental leases must terminate by March 1, 2006. (4) FEMA will pay for fees associated with terminating leases signed under the initial "leases up-to-12 months" program guidance.

**ISSUES:** The changes in program guidance could result in additional hardship for the evacuees. (1) While FEMA gave materials to the

hotels/corporate lodges to distribute to the evacuees notifying them of the December 1, 2005 deadline and encouraging the evacuees to call the FEMA housing hotline; the deadline for evacuees to register with the FEMA hotline is January 11, 2006 which is after the December 1, 2005 deadline for evacuees to secure an interim housing lease.

(2) The changes will require state staff to modify the 12-month housing process that state/federal staff had negotiated with WHEDA and the public housing authorities (PHAs) around the state. This could result in financial hardship for the public housing authorities and their tenants. (Attachment B outlines Wisconsin's Interim/Transitional Housing Program for FEMA-3249-EM-WISCONSIN. Attachment C is FEMA's Disaster Specific Guidance-Hurricanes Katrina and Rita that contains the guidance changes.)

(3) Some evacuees will not qualify for Section 408 IHP housing which could result in evacuees being homeless in Wisconsin as of the termination of their leases on March 1, 2006. These evacuees will then need to be picked up by existing state housing and social programs and could result in a large gap between needs and programs.

(4) The deadline for evacuees to qualify for transportation to another state is December 31, 2005. Currently, there is not a deadline for a return trip home.

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

(1) Notify agencies, the public housing authorities and emergency managers of the changes in guidance. Ensure that the material identifies that payment for utilities and rental furniture under KDHAP also expires on 3/01/06. (WEM, HUD and WHEDA staff, completed)

(2) Notify the Governor and the Congressional Delegation of the deadline changes outlined in FEMA guidance. (WEM, HUD and WHEDA staff)

(3) Adjust leases and help evacuees get temporary housing by December 1, 2005. (WHEDA, HUD and PHAs)

(4) Contact hotels to ensure that the housing information is forwarded to evacuees living in their facilities. (high priority, WEM staff, completed)

- (5) Prepare for increased demand on state housing and social programs. (high priority, immediate, WEM staff and administration)
- (6) Incorporate these topics as agenda items for the state VOAD meeting on December 12, 2005. (WEM staff)
- (7) Agencies and organizations should list direct impacts to their programs to assist with the development of a strategy to address the program shortfalls and unmet needs. (All agencies and organizations)
- (8) Write press releases for distribution on the above topics to reflect our Wisconsin perspective. (WEM and Governor's office staff)
- (9) Write a situation report on Relief Efforts in Wisconsin for Hurricane Katrina and Rita Evacuees for distribution to Governor, congressional delegation and legislators. (WEM, WHEDA, HUD, DHFS, DWD staff)
- (10) Set up briefing for the Governor and Congressional staff on the above. (WEM, WHEDA, HUD staff)

#### **THE MILWAUKEE KATRINA DISASTER RELIEF EFFORTS RESIDUAL ISSUES- UPDATED 11/15/05**

**DISCUSSION:** Brenda Bell-White explained the concerns point-by-point outlined in the November 15, 2005 draft. See Attachment E for specifics. FEMA Section 403 Public Assistance funding will cover case management directly related to housing but will not cover long term case management for evacuees. Most issues fall under social services and case management and are covered under the next agenda item.

**ISSUES:** (1) The City of Milwaukee Housing Authority has incurred \$357,000 in expenses but has not been reimbursed by FEMA.  
(2) Funding is needed to continue the One-Stop Center in Milwaukee to assist evacuees with various housing and social services. The 211 line is helping with these services at this time.

**ACTION ITEMS:** (1) FEMA Region V staff will check into payment status and report to WEM staff.  
(2) Review itemized list and associated costs in Attachment E to determine allowable costs under various programs. (All)

## **FUNDING CASE MANAGEMENT TO ASSIST DISASTER VICTIMS WITH LONG TERM RECOVERY NEEDS**

**DISCUSSION:** Department of Health and Family Services staff and their contractor, New Concepts, described the details of a FEMA Crisis Counseling grant for the Milwaukee area, including 11 counties in southeast Wisconsin. The grant does not allow for training, hiring and outreach to help with longer-term case management for the evacuees.

We briefly discussed the main points of the Request for Proposal for the \$66M NVOAD United Methodist Committee on Relief assistance proposal and potential applicants.

See Attachment F for a summary of the UMCOR program.

**ISSUES:** (1) At this time we do not know if or how the UMCOR grant and sub-grants will be able to help with the long-term case management for Katrina evacuees in Wisconsin.

### **ACTION ITEMS:**

(1) Convene a meeting of the VOAD agencies and organizations to determine what case management and other services will fall on agencies and organizations as part of their normal workload.

## **WHERE ARE WE NOW AND WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? NEXT STEPS – DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE ROLES FOR ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES – WHAT CAN YOU OFFER?**

**DISCUSSION:** Participants asked “What can we do for the Katrina evacuees and how do we continue to assist other residents in our state? They commented that this is a problem of national scale that has now become an issue that will need to be addressed and solved by all levels of government. We concluded the meeting by offering suggestions for future discussions for the group.

**ISSUES:** (1) This is a problem of national scale that has now become an issue that will need to be addressed and solved within our state. One model that was suggested was to investigate and compare disaster needs and services with the services offered as part of the Refugee Resettlement Program.

**ACTION ITEMS:** (1) Develop a summary of the meeting and circulate for review to meeting participants. Capture the identified tasks and

form sub-groups by subject to address how these tasks can be accomplished in the short and long term. Some suggested subjects were case management, congressional notification and funding. High priority topics were the notification of agencies, the development of press releases and situation reports on the subjects and scheduling congressional briefings. (WEM staff)

(2) Document processes used and lessons learned for future disaster planning. (All)

(3) Write report summarizing Hurricane Katrina and Rita Disaster Relief initiatives in Wisconsin. (All)

**BACKGROUND MATERIALS PACKAGE:**

Attachment A - Agenda and Attendance List

Attachment B - FEMA-3249 –EM-Wisconsin Interim/Transitional Housing Program Summary

Attachment C - Disaster Specific Guidance-Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

Attachment E - Katrina Milwaukee Emergency Center Report

Attachment F – UMCOR Summary

Attachment G - Katrina Evacuees Housing Data Information

**ADDITIONAL REFERENCES:**

National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster Relief and Recovery Assistance Guide

New Concepts Crisis Counseling

FEMA News